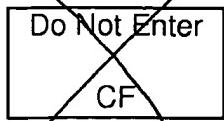


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7/24/08



LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1 (currently amended): Hot rolled steel sheet excellent in chemical convertibility free from bald spots ~~produced through a hot rolling and pickling step characterized by the steel sheet containing, by mass%,~~

C: 0.03 to 0.15%, Si: 0.8 to 3.0%,

Mn: 0.5 to 3.0%, P: 0.07% or less,

S: 0.01% or less, Al: 0.015 to 0.1%,

N: 0.001 to 0.008%,

the steel sheet optionally containing one or more of the Ti: 0.02 to 0.3%, Nb: 0.01 to 0.5%, Ni 0.1 to 2.0%, B: 0.0002 to 0.006% and Ca: 0.0005 to 0.005%; and

the steel sheet being free from the containing Cu and Mo, and the balance of Fe and unavoidable impurities, the oxides on the steel sheet surface having, by mass%, an Si concentration of 3.5% or less and an Mn concentration of 3.5% or less, and

an average roughness Ra of the steel sheet surface is 3.0 μm or less and a number of pittings of a diameter of 1 μm to 0.3 μm due to the pickling is an average 5 or less in squares of the steel sheet surface when dividing it into squares of 10 μm per side,

the steel sheet obtained by pickling by dipping the steel sheet in an aqueous solution containing a HNO_3 concentration of 0.5 to 5 mass % and a HCl concentration of 7 to 15 mass %, an Fe ion concentration of 4 to 12% and a balance of metal ions other than Fe and impurities, at a solution temperature of 80 to 98°C for 40 sec or more to when the HCl concentration (mass %) x dipping time (sec) becomes 520 or less.

Claims 2 to 8: (canceled)